

NORTH CAROLINA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
Office of Archives and History
Department of Cultural Resources

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Williamson Page House

Morrisville, Wake County, WA0708, Listed 4/16/2012

Nomination by Ellen Turco

Photographs by Ellen Turco, November 2011



Facade view



Rear view

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Page, Williamson, House

other names/site number _____

2. Location

Street & number 116 S. Page Street

N/A ☐ not for publication

city or town Morrisville

N/A ☐ vicinity

State North Carolina

code NC

county Wake

code 183

zip code 27560

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set for in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See Continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined eligible for the
National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National
Register.

☐ other,
(explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	3	structures
0	0	objects
1	4	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of Contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling

DOMESTIC/secondary structure

VACANT/not in use

7. Description**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: I-house

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE, BRICK

walls WOOD

roof METAL

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** moved from its original location.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

ca. 1876

Significant Dates

ca. 1876

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ Previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☐ Local Government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

Page, Williamson House
Name of Property

Wake, North Carolina
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title Ellen Turco
organization Circa, Inc date November 9, 2011
Street & number PO Box 28365 telephone 919-219-1489
city or town Raleigh state NC zip code 27611

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

Name Mary Jo Ferrell and D. H. Lumley
Street & number 116 S. Page Street telephone
city or town Morrisville state NC zip code 27560

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listing. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20303.

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National Register of Historic Places
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Page, Williamson, House
Wake County, NC

Section 7/Physical Description

Setting:

Morrisville is located in western Wake County approximately twelve miles west of Raleigh, the county seat and state capital. The town has grown significantly since 1990 due to its proximity to Raleigh-Durham International Airport and the Research Triangle Park. Currently, most of the town's building stock is post-1980s residential construction.

The town's historic core is comprised of approximately twenty-five historic buildings making up the "depot village" situated around the crossroads of Morrisville-Carpenter Road running east-west, Chapel Hill Road (NC 54) running north-south, and the Southern Railway tracks that bisect the village east-west. The historic village core contains dwellings, commercial buildings, and two churches all dating from ca. 1870 through 1941.

The house is located about two blocks south of the crossroads on South Page Street, which runs southeast from Morrisville-Carpenter Road to its terminus at the Williamson Page House (116 South Page Street). The dwelling and three outbuildings sit on a cleared three-acre parcel that differs in size from the small landscaped "town lots" of its neighbors. The roughly triangular-shaped legal parcel is bounded on the east side by the raised bed of the railroad right-of-way, and on the west side by an unimproved drainage ditch. The ditch wraps around to the southeast and empties into Crabtree Creek just east of the property. The south property line runs just north of the drainage ditch. The topography is level, with a slight slope from north to south as the land nears the creek.

The house faces north. There are several large oak and cedar trees in the front yard. A paved driveway leads from the end of South Page Street to a parking pad on the house's east side that ends at a 1970s flat-roofed carport. Southwest of the dwelling is a 1960s T-shaped, frame and concrete block workshop and wood shed building. A well pumphouse and well house, also both constructed of concrete block, are situated southeast of the house. Both of these structures date from the 1960s, but the well house covers a mid-nineteenth-century stone-lined well. Stones from the foundation of a mid-nineteenth-century frame kitchen/smokehouse, demolished sometime in the 1960s, are visible on a slight rise south of the well.

HOUSE **contributing building** **ca. 1830s; ca. 1876; 1970s**

The Williamson Page House consists of three sections. The front (north) section, according to family lore, originally a ca. 1830 hall-and-parlor plan, one- or one-and-a-half-story dwelling, is now a central-hall I-house. Abutting its rear (south) wall is a ca. 1876 transverse stair hall which connects the front section with a two-story rear ell. The two-story rear ell appears to be a mid-nineteenth-century structure built slightly later than the front section, perhaps as a separate dependency. Family accounts state that the Pages took shelter in a cellar under the dwelling during the Battle of Morrisville station in April of 1865. If this is true then the ell was standing before that time.

Structure

The dwelling's floor system reveals three distinct units of construction, and is worth describing here.

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The I-house rests on a foundation of fieldstone and cut stone piers infilled with bricks and concrete blocks. The floor system is framed with twelve-inch by twelve-inch hewn sills and log joists planed flat on the top side. There are some circular sawn replacement joists. The west room and center hall share continuous lengths of pit sawn flooring; the original flooring of the east room has been replaced with tongue-and-groove boards. A single summer beam runs beneath the east wall of the center hall, possibly indicating the front section was built with a hall-and-parlor plan and that its present center-hall plan is likely a later modification. The hewn sills, unfinished joists, and hewn flooring would have been typically produced by hand on site or nearby.

Construction techniques and materials of the rear ell can be seen clearly from the basement beneath it. The space is approximately five-and-one-half feet in height and has walls of soft brick. A square, brick chimney base is situated in the center of the basement. Large hand-hewn sills support the east and west walls, and smaller pit sawn ones are at the north and south ends. The joists and flooring are sash sawn. The construction can be described as "mid-nineteenth-century" roughly dating between the 1830s and 1860s. It is difficult to determine which section was built first, the front or the ell, or if they were built concurrently.

The roughly finished perimeter sills of the ell could be concurrent with those of I-house section; however, the lighter sash sawn joists of the ell are dissimilar from the unfinished logs on the I-house section. By the 1850s, most communities in Wake County had access to precut lumber produced at a local water powered saw mill and milled lumber would have almost certainly been available to a wealthy family such as the Pages. While the saws in use at this time could efficiently produce many board feet of joists, posts, planks and flooring, they could not yet accommodate large sills and other massive structural elements and these continued to be hewn by hand (Lounsbury 199). The differences between the joists used on the front and rear sections may illustrate the transition from completely hand-crafted structures to ones built by a combination of hand and machine power.

The transverse stair hall is built exclusively of post-Civil War circular sawn lumber and the differences in cut and dimension between this section and the ones that flank it are clear from under the house.

Exterior

The current appearance of the Williamson Page House is that of a side-gabled I-house with a two-story gabled rear wing. Its symmetrical, three-bay façade is spanned by a one-story hipped-roof porch. The roof is covered with sheet metal that has been in place since at least the 1940s. Three brick chimneys serve the dwelling: two exterior, one at each end of the I-house section, and a central interior one serving the ell. The brick end chimneys have shallow double shoulders, the lower one of paved bricks and the upper set of stepped bricks. The chimney stacks abut the side walls of the house, piercing the roof overhang of the gable ends. This placement of the stacks against, rather than separated from, the dwelling suggests the upper portion of the chimneys dates from the ca. 1876 remodeling when the house was likely raised from one or one-and-half stories to two stories. Joints are struck with light-colored sandy mortar.

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The exterior envelope retains a great deal of ca. 1876 building material. Plain weatherboard siding covers the walls and the door and window openings have plain surrounds. At each corner is a corner board with half-round edges. The six-over-six double-hung window sashes have louvered wood shutters that hang on original hinges. The dwelling's gable ends are handsomely finished with eave returns and a wide plain frieze board. A pair of trapezoidal vents flank each chimney stack. The frieze board is also found on the façade and rear elevation of the main block. The ell has cornice returns, a wide plain frieze and a single peaked gable vent.

The relatively simple finishes on the body of the dwelling contrast with its fanciful front porch. The porch is supported by narrow, square posts which are paired on either side of the entry, tripled at the corners, and found singly against the façade. Jigsawn spandrels repeat a simplified fleur-de-lis pattern. The narrow spaces between the vertical posts are infilled with serpentine scrolls. The balustrade is made up of flat, repeating jigsawn balusters. The entry door has twin tall arched glazed panes over two vertical panels. A two-light transom surmounts the door. Carpet covers the porch floor; the ceiling is sheathed with flush boards.

In the late 1970s, a series of updates were made to the house: a large wooden deck was built along the west wall of the rear ell; the window opening at the ell's south end was converted to a door opening to access the deck; and a door on the south wall of the ell was converted to a small window opening installed at a height to accommodate kitchen cabinetry. The one-story, hipped-roof porch along the east wall of the ell was also enclosed at this time on the south end with weatherboard siding and awning windows. The central section was left open for an entry porch area. The porch's north section had already been enclosed for a bathroom around 1946.

Interior (see attached floor plan and door schedule)

Much, though not all, of the interior woodwork dates from ca. 1876. Each of the dwelling's three sections has a combination of doors from the ca. 1830 and ca. 1876 phases of construction, so it is important to note that the doors may not be in their original locations. The four mantels in the I-house section and the downstairs mantel in the ell are similar in overall appearance, but there are subtle differences in size and applied molding detail, suggesting they may not have been fashioned at the same time or by the same hand. All the mantels can be described as late Greek Revival in style, with square pilasters supporting a frieze. A second set of pilasters within the frieze has moldings that flare to support a plain square-edged mantel shelf. With the exception of the first-floor west-side room, all of the firebox openings are covered with plywood and converted with gas heaters. The west room has a new brick firebox, raised hearth and a set of gas logs.

Other features that are consistent throughout the house are described as follows. The baseboards are plain with a simple bead molding. Throughout the dwelling plaster walls are covered with wall paper. Drywall ceilings and crown molding were installed over the plaster ceilings around 1990 when the plaster began to fail. Throughout the house the wood floors are covered with carpet, with the exception of the vinyl floor covering in the kitchen and bathrooms. Door and window trim is robust and rounded, consistent with the 1870s, although not all trim configurations are identical.

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The dwelling's front section is typical of the I-house form, consisting of a center passage flanked by two rooms. Each room is accessed from the central hall by a four-panel door, with two large rectangular panels above two smaller ones. The door to the west room has a cut glass knob and the east door has a porcelain one. The west room has a fireplace across from the door and windows in the north and south walls. The east room also has a fireplace, and the dwelling's largest mantel, measuring eighty-inches wide by fifty-eight inches high. There is a window centered in the north wall, and a second, newer one south of the fireplace. The window opening in the rear wall has been changed to a door opening with a set of bi-fold doors leading to a ca. 1946 bathroom.

A narrow, transverse east-west stair hall connects the I-house and ell. An arched opening, likely dating from ca. 1876, that springs from heavily molded brackets leads from the center hall of the I-house to the transverse hall. A doorway in the hall's east wall leads to a ca. 1946 bathroom, the dwelling's first, created by enclosing the north section of the side porch. In the west wall is a two-panel Greek Revival-style door leading to the deck. Its wooden panels have been replaced with glass. The stair runs up the south wall, and turns at a landing on the west wall. It has turned balusters and a chunky turned newel post with a bulls-eye top. The stair was added during the ca. 1876 remodeling and replaced the original winder stair in the east room of the I-house section. The present owner states that her ancestors recall a stair at this location and its existence is supported by mortise cuts in the flooring of the second floor east bedroom that approximate the location of a newel post and balustrade. A second-story stair or access point has not been found within the ell.

At the base of the stair is a doorway with a five-panel door leading to the two-room ell. This is the dwelling's only five-panel door, and the only door set within a flat, plain casing. The first room in the ell, currently the dining room, is the larger of the two. In the east wall is a two-panel door with replacement glass panes, like the one in the stair hall leading to the deck. Centered on the south wall is a late Greek Revival-style mantels similar to the others found in the house. To the west of the fireplace is a closet with a door with two vertical panels and a white porcelain knob. Once used as a pantry, its interior walls are sheathed with tin shingles. The kitchen is accessed through a doorless framed opening east of the fireplace. The wood cabinetry dates from mid-1980s. A glazed and paneled four-panel door in the kitchen's west wall leads to the deck. This door opening was enlarged from a window opening in the 1970s. Over the sink in the south wall is a modern two-pane window which the current occupants claim replaced a door prior to the 1970s. At the east end of the kitchen, within the former porch (enclosed in the 1970s), is a small sitting area and bathroom.

Second Floor

At the top of the stairs a four-panel door in the north wall of the transverse hall leads to the center hall of the I-house section. A bedroom is situated on either side of the hall. Each bedroom is accessed from the hall by a vertical two-panel door, although the doors are of uneven heights (the east one is lower) and finished slightly differently. The west bedroom door displays plain, recessed panels and the panels of the east bedroom door are edged with a molding. Both doors have white porcelain knobs and box locks with raised manufacturer's labels, which are unreadable due to paint accumulation. Closets were added to the inside walls of both bedrooms in the 1970s.

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The rear ell is comprised of a long hall running down the east side and two bedrooms on the west side. The larger, north room is accessed by a two-panel Green Revival-style door. A portion of the rear (south) bedroom was partitioned for a bathroom in the 1970s. This smaller bedroom is accessed through the bathroom and a replacement wooden, hollow-core door. Each bedroom has a fireplace; the front (north) room has a simple post-and-lintel mantel, and the rear (south) room has a post-and-lintel mantel with a recessed lintel. West of the north room mantel is a closet with a two-panel Greek Revival-style door, copying the fireplace-closet configuration of the dining room directly below.

Workshop/Wood Shed **non-contributing building** **ca. 1960**

This one-story T-shaped outbuilding was built around 1960. The north "short" section is built of concrete block. A vinyl six-panel entry door is centered on the east gable end. On the north and west elevations are wood six-over-six window sash. The south, "long" section is covered with vinyl siding. It has a garage door and a six-panel entry door on the east elevation and two six-over-six window sashes on the west side. The roof of both sections is covered with asphalt shingles.

Well Pumphouse **non-contributing structure** **ca. 1960**

East of the dwelling is a small concrete ca. 1960 well pumphouse with a gabled roof of asphalt shingles. There is a small wooden entry panel on the south elevation.

Well House **non-contributing structure** **ca. 1960**

South of the well pumphouse is a square concrete block ca. 1960 well cover with a gabled wood roof on bracketed square wood posts. The cover shelters a mid-nineteenth-century stone-lined well.

Carport **non-contributing structure** **ca. 1970s**

A flat-roofed carport on metal posts is located off the east elevation. At the north end of the carport is a storage closet.

The contributing structures are closely related to the surrounding environment. Archaeological remains, such as trash pits, older wells, privies, and other structural remains which may be present, can provide information valuable to the understanding and interpretation of the contributing structures. Information concerning land use patterns, social standing and mobility, late nineteenth to early twentieth century tobacco farming practices, as well as structural details, is often only evident in the archaeological record. Therefore, archaeological remains may well be an important component of the significance of the structure. At this time no investigation has been done to discover these remains, but it is likely that they exist, and this should be considered in any development of the property.

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Page, Williamson, House
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Significance Statement

The Williamson Page House was built around 1830, and overbuilt and remodeled ca. 1876. The house today consists of two sections: a two-story I-house and two-story rear wing. The wall surfaces of the dwelling are simply detailed with plain weatherboards siding, half-round corner boards, and gable end returns. Six-over-six wooden windows are set in simple window surrounds. On each side elevation is double-shouldered chimney. A one-story hipped-roof porch spans the facade, and this porch is the property's most marked feature. The porch is trimmed with jig sawn spandrels and a flat balustrade with vasiform repeat. This elaborate yet vernacular assemblage of sawn trim on the front porch makes the Page House architecturally significant to Wake County.

The Williamson Page House meets National Register Criterion C for its architecture. The period of significance is ca. 1876, the year the house attained its current appearance. The dwelling is the most intact of a small collection of houses in Morrisville with creative and elaborate assemblages of locally-produced mill work most notably present on the front porch of this building. The architectural significance of the property is established in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic and Architectural Resources of Wake County, North Carolina (ca. 1770-1941)," by Kelly Lally. Historic context for the property is presented in Context 2 "Civil War, Reconstruction and a Shift to Commercial Agriculture (1861-1885)" (pages E30-46), and Property type B "Houses Built Between the Civil War and World War I (1865-ca. 1918)," (pages F131-137). The form includes the Williamson Page House in a grouping of six noteworthy Wake County late Greek Revival-style houses, all in close proximity to the North Carolina Railroad, sharing similar intricate, lacy, machine-sawn porch detailing (F133)." The dwelling displays a high degree of integrity from the period of significance, as required by the registration requirements for Wake County houses stipulated on pages F141-142. The house retains its form, materials, orientation, and association with the land. Non-historic alterations include the addition of the deck on the west side elevation and the partial enclosure of the east side porch. These changes detract only minimally from the dwelling's overall historic character.

Historical Background

U.S. Census records show that the Page family resided in Wake County as early as 1800. The census of that year lists Lewis Page as head of a household with eleven white members including his wife, Sarah, and no slaves. Williamson Page (1795-1888) was the son of Sarah and Lewis. Williamson is known to have had at least three siblings, brothers named Anderson, Sidney and Allison Francis (Frank). Williamson Page and Mary "Polly" Blake (b. ?; d. 1876) married in 1821. In April of 1822, Williamson's mother, Sarah, gave to him "one negro girl by the name of "Samey" (book 5; page 208). Given the date of the deed it is possible the female slave was a gift to Williamson upon or soon after his marriage.

In 1826, at around age thirty, Williamson Page bought from Lewis Page a 187-acre tract of land for the sum of "one hundred and fifty dollars and my part of the tract of lands which is three shares out of ten where my mother now lives," (book 7; page 150). It is not known if this deed is the one for the Williamson Page House tract; however, the agreement supports the family's tradition that Williamson bought, rather than inherited, the parcel from his father (Robert Malcus Johnston letter to Mary Jo Ferrell, 1949).

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Page, Williamson, House
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By 1840, Williamson Page had established himself as a prosperous Wake County farmer. The 1840 census records him as head of a household of twenty-three: four white boys under the age of fifteen; four white girls under the age of twenty, a white woman between forty and fifty years of age (presumably his wife Polly), twelve slaves, and a free colored male between the age of ten and twenty-four. Slightly less than half of Wake County's free white households owned slaves in the 1840s, and Williamson Page's twelve enslaved workers would have placed him in the category of "large farmer," defined by historian Kelly Lally as one with fewer than twenty slaves and owning at least several hundred acres of land (*Wake County*, Lally 16- 17). The 1860 census lists sixty-five year old Williamson Page as a "farmer" with real estate holdings and a personal estate valued at \$14,416. Living with him were his wife, a thirty-two year old male (Oreas?), Malphus (also spelled in various documents and legal records as "Malcus" and "Malcos"), age 24; Mary, 19, and a domestic servant named Elizabeth Sorrel.

Williamson's son, Malcus "Mack" W. Page (1835-1910), would marry Katherine "Kate" Jane Clause in 1862 according to family records. They had twelve children before Kate died in 1885. Malcus married Sarah Earp Debnam in 1887. Sarah bore Malcus two more children.

When the Civil War began in April of 1861, Malcus Page was young man of twenty-five, the son of a relatively prosperous western Wake County family. Page's descendants maintain that just after the war commenced, Company I, Sixth North Carolina Infantry Regiment of the Confederate States Army was formed on the lawn of Williamson Page's house. The regiment was comprised of men from the Morrisville and Cary areas ("Six Generations of Pages"; Johnston to Ferrell letter 9 March 1955.). Malcus Page voluntarily enlisted on May 1861 and was assigned the rank of 1st Lieutenant in Company I, earning a salary of ninety dollars per month (Confederate Service Records). Page traveled with his company to Winchester, Virginia, where they trained under General Joseph E. Johnson and soon afterward fought in the first battle at Manassas. Page's service records state that in addition to First Manassas he also fought at the battles of Etham's Landing and Seven Pines. Page was promoted to the rank of Captain, Assistant Quartermaster on September 16, 1862. Captain Page tendered his resignation on April 14, 1863, at the request of his commanding officer, after being found "inefficient and totally incompetent to discharge the duties of his office" (Confederate Service Records).

Page's whereabouts during the Battle of Morrisville Station on April 13, 1865, are unknown; however, it is possible that he was at home in Morrisville having left the service a year prior. The battle developed as Union troops led by General Judson Kilpatrick captured the State Capitol in Raleigh. Federal cavalry followed the Confederate forces as they retreated along the North Carolina Railroad through Morrisville toward Durham Station, the location of General Johnson's surrender to General Sherman on April 26th. At Morrisville, both sides clashed over the depot and a train pulling cars loaded with supplies and wounded Confederate soldiers. The Confederates were able to fend off the attack long enough for the cars carrying the wounded to flee. Skirmishes continued, and that night several thousand Union soldiers camped in Morrisville (Dollar 4; "Battle of Morrisville"). Family oral history maintains that members of the Page family and their slaves were present during the battle and hid in the cellar—suggesting the rear ell had been erected by that time. As was customary, Federal officers quartered in the fine house and helped themselves to supplies (Johnson 1949 letter; "Six Generations of Pages").

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Page, Williamson, House
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After the war, in 1866, Malcus Page received from his father 438 acres “plus the dwelling in which I now live and other houses.” The deed was to take effect after the deaths of Williamson Page and his wife, Polly. The wording of the deed strongly suggests that Williamson and Polly were living in the house throughout the war. A family letter states that after the war Malcus resided with his family in the rear half of the “Maynard House.” Polly Page passed away on March 2, 1876. Subsequently, Williamson is said to have gone to live with his son Sidney, and Malcus and his family moved into the Williamson Page House. This transition precipitated the “modernizing” of the dwelling to its present appearance.

In 1880, Malcus Page became Wake County’s Register of Deeds and Sheriff. He served as sheriff until 1906, when he resigned because the state legislature limited the amount of commissions sheriffs could receive on collected taxes to fifty-thousand dollars (WCBOC Minutes 5 June 1906; “M. W. Page Resigns”; “Page Says He’s Robbed”; “Authors of the Robbery.”) He died in 1910. His oldest son William “Will” Lee Page inherited the house and about two-hundred-and-fifty acres. He lived there with his wife, Clyde Morris Page, and their four children: William Lee Page Jr., Robert Morris Page, Jane Elizabeth Page and Mary Eleanor Page. Will Page died intestate in 1917, but his family remained at the homeplace until 1929. In 1946, Mary Page and her husband David Hubert Ferrell moved back into the house after purchasing it and 104 acres on three tracts from her siblings. Hubert and Mary Page Ferrell’s children, Mary Jo and Bobby Ferrell, were born and raised in the house. Mary Page lived a long life in her house, passing away in 2009. Her daughter, Mary Jo Ferrell Lumley and her husband, Harvey E. Lumley, lived in the house with Mary Page Ferrell until her death. The Lumleys inherited the home and are now the fifth generation of the Page family to own the property. The house now sits on a three-acre parcel.

Architecture Context

Architectural historian M. Ruth Little observes that Morrisville derives its “primary architectural significance” from its earliest surviving dwellings. These houses share distinctive sawn porch ornamentation that is ornate by local comparison. These dwellings are the ca. 1870 Pugh House, located until recently at the northwest corner of Aviation Parkway and Chapel Hill Road, and now moved to 103 Page Street; the Page-Hamilton House, at 201 Church Street, built by Williamson Page for his son Sidney ca. 1879; and the ca. 1830 Williamson Page House, remodeled ca. 1876. Despite the attention lavished on the porches, each of these dwellings is an example of the regionally ubiquitous I-house-with-ell form. Little states the Morrisville porches are decidedly different from the “heavy, chamfered, turned and bracketed trim work which became popular in the late nineteenth century” (Morrisville Historic District 8.5-6).

The Williamson Page House’s current exterior appearance dates to a major ca. 1876 remodeling. The exterior reads as a late nineteenth-century, two-story, weatherboarded I-house with a two-story rear ell. Across the facade is a porch with graceful, sawn fleur-de-lis themed spandrels, and a two-dimensional sawn balustrade with a repeating pattern. The entire dwelling is sheathed with plain weatherboards and has handsomely finished gable-end returns. The interior features late Greek Revival-style mantels and trim, and two-, four-, and five-panel doors.

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The Pugh House is the most elaborately decorated of the three dwellings. The porch features arched spandrels connecting paired chamfered posts and a “sawn balustrade with a vasiform repeat” (Pezzoni 7.1). The ornamentation continues with fleur-de-lis bargeboards in the gables and a cornice of brackets and pendants spanning the façade and rear elevation. The porch of the Page-Hamilton House more closely resembles that of the Williamson Page House, not surprising given the family connection between the properties. The Page-Hamilton House has a sawn balustrade identical to the one at the Williamson Page House, a very similar sawn, bud-pattern frieze, and serpentine cut-outs between the slender, square posts.

A few miles east of Morrisville on the current site of the Cary town hall was another Page family house, now demolished. This was the home of “Frank” Page, who divided the town of Cary from his own landholdings in the late 1860s. A documentary photograph of Frank Page’s home on display at the Page-Walker Arts and History Center shows an I-house with front porch sawn work very similar to that on the Williamson Page House including the dropped fleur-de-lis cut-outs. This house was reputed to have been a ca. 1790s one-and-half-story dwelling that was later overbuilt to an I-house-and-ell form also similar to the Williamson Page House.

Little, Pezzoni and Lally point out that desire for stylish dwellings may have been stronger in railroad towns where the resident’s homes were highly visible and there was direct access to building materials transported by train. They note the southeastern Wake County railroad depot community of Auburn retains two houses with lavish porches comparable to the ones in Morrisville. The precise source of the millwork for the Auburn, Morrisville and Cary houses is unknown; however, there were several sash and blind factories in the area in the late nineteenth century including ones in Cary, Apex and Morrisville; Frank Page owned the sawmill in Cary (Pezzoni 8.10; Page-Walker exhibit).

The Williamson Page House remains the most intact of the three surviving dwellings noted above in terms of both setting and materials; both the Pugh House and the Page-Hamilton House are covered with vinyl siding, and the Pugh House is no longer on its original site. The Williamson Page House remains on its original site and retains a high degree of ca. 1873 materials and details. For these reason the house is the best example of a localized building phenomena, the “Morrisville porch.”

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Section 10

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Williamson Page House are shown by a black line on the accompanying tax parcel map drawn to a scale of 1 inch = 200 feet.

Verbal Boundary Justification

The three-acre boundary contains the Williamson Page House and later non-contributing outbuildings. The property is the remaining acreage historically associated with the house and provides an appropriate setting.

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Photographs:

Name of Property: Williamson Page House

Town: Morrisville

County: Wake **State:** NC

Photographer: Ellen Turco

Date Photographed: February 2011

Description of Photographs and number:

- 1 of 13: Front/north elevation
- 2 of 13: West elevation
- 3 of 13: East elevation
- 4 of 13: Rear/south & east elevations
- 5 of 13: Porch
- 6 of 13: Porch detail-spandrel
- 7 of 13: Porch detail-ballustrade
- 8 of 13: Workshop/woodshed
- 9 of 13: Well house & pumphouse
- 10 of 13: Mantle and 2-panel pantry door, 1st floor rear ell
- 11 of 13: Mantel, 1st floor I-house, west room
- 12 of 13: Mantel, 1st floor I-house, east room